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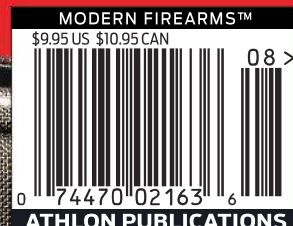
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DISPLAY UNTIL SEPT. 12, 2022



GOING LONG

FEDERAL AND OUTDOOR SOLUTIONS PARTNER TO GET STUDENTS ON TARGET AT 1,000 YARDS

BY FRANK MELLONI



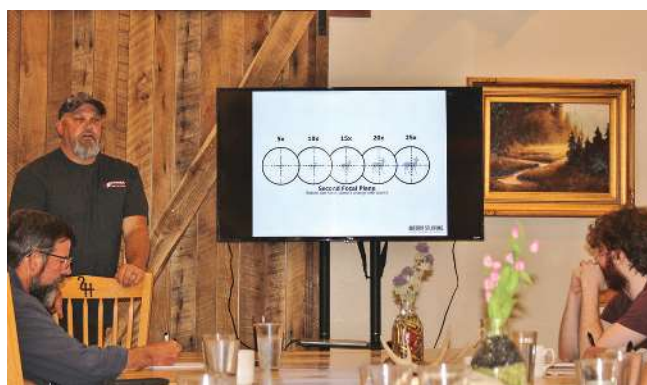
→ A lot of work goes into factory-made, long-range precision ammunition. I give the engineers at Federal a lot of credit for their ability to make a round that not only performs out to extended distances but does so out of a variety of rifles. While long-range equipment arrives on the field entirely shored up, often the most important part of the weapon system does not. That part, of course, is the nut behind the butt pad, better known as the shooter. This became wildly evident to Out-

door Solutions when it took its first few clients out on a hunt that involved shots beyond 200 yards. This lack of training spawned a multi-state, long-

range shooting academy that I had the pleasure of attending at its Michigan location earlier this year.

And although I run a

firearms training school of my own and teach a good amount of long-range training, life is about remaining an eternal student. I like to say, "The moment you think you learned it all, you're right." Meaning that once you feel that you can't learn anymore on a given subject, you have built a dam to new information. There is always something to learn and, if I don't take away



Classroom instruction gave both beginners and seasoned shooters all the info they needed for success on the range later.





1,000 yards might seem far, but the author says that with the right ammo, it really isn't.



IN ALL OF THESE YEARS, I NEVER REALIZED THE VALUE THAT A CLOUD OF DIRT CONTAINS.



something from the material, I'll take something away from the teaching method. Besides, this course was being taught by an elite team of instructors that I was excited to spend some time with even if for nothing more than a good campfire discussion. At the helm was former Team FN shooter Erik Lund being assisted by Marine Corps scout sniper Lucas Anderson and private security professional Brent Hand. With a lineup like that, only a fool would walk into this course with a closed mind. Aside

from the pool of instructional wisdom that I was emersed in, I also had the opportunity to spend time with the brains behind the bullets, Jacob Burns and J.J. Reich of Federal's engineering and marketing departments, respectively.

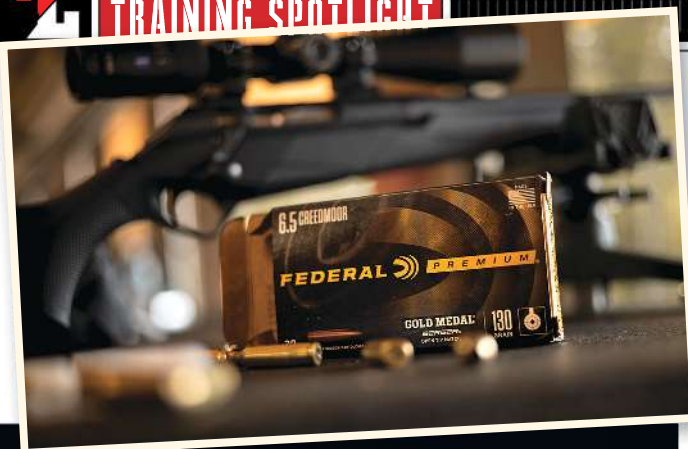
LET'S GET IT ON

We started covering the basics of long-range shooting the day we arrived, right after the introductions of both the staff and each individual shooter. We had a good mix of students consisting of those with moderate

rifle shooting experience and those with next to zero. I liked how the instructors went around and had each person verbalize what it was they wanted to accomplish from the course. I felt that helped direct the lecture portion accordingly and ensured the right material was covered in depth. Here I learned a few things about reading mirage as well as the dust from an impact. In all of these years, I never realized the value that a cloud of dirt contains. Those that weren't up to that level yet took away a thorough

explanation of MOA, wind reading and scope functions such as resetting the turrets and knowing the difference between first and second focal planes.

Another aspect of the portion that I admired was that they didn't assume everybody understood proper trigger control and covered trigger finger positioning, what to do with your thumb alongside the tenets of a proper trigger squeeze and follow-through. Lastly, we were introduced to the Geo Ballistics Ballistics-ARC app and were



A NOTE ON BULLET CONSISTENCY



Skill and knowledge are important to hit a target at an extended distance. However, all that work is in vain if the round cannot produce a repeatable, predictable point of impact. Berger's 130-grain, open-tip match bullet handles this task easily, and Federal knows how to consistently load them into cartridges. Federal holds these rounds to the tightest tolerances of any of its ammunition lines and only uses premium components that are on par with such a flawless projectile. Match-grade powders and small primer-pocket cases are used to create the lowest standard deviation possible, resulting in less vertical displacement while eliminating the pressure issue that previously plagued this cartridge. I used this ammo throughout the entire course and not only didn't experience a single malfunction, but also hardly missed a shot. —Frank Melloni



assisted with putting in our issued rifle and ammunition data. While the material took approximately six hours to cover, my eyelid inventory remained at zero, serving testament to the high level of engagement that these guys had with the students.

RANGE DAY

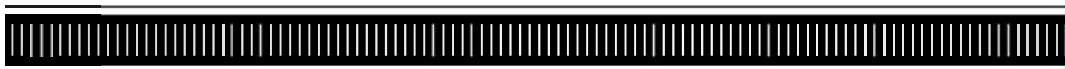
Our first full day started with a 7 a.m. breakfast and then a bus ride to the range, located just down the trail. After a safety refresher, we were more intimately introduced to the Benelli Lupo rifle and the peripheral equipment through a series of demonstrations. After about an hour, we were paired up and sent off to zero our rifles at 100 yards. Both myself and teammate Jacob Burns got our rifles centered up in just a few shots and were instructed to punch in our data and start confirming our D.O.P.E. out to 500 yards. We were both using a Federal Gold Medal Match 6.5 Creedmoor round, mine topped with the 130-grain Berger bullet and Jake's topped with the 140-grain Sierra offering. I was amazed at how well both of these rounds performed. Not only were they within 1.5 MOA at each distance (and sub-MOA at 100), but both produced this with a random gun pairing. Some might say we got lucky, but there isn't any luck in the shooting world, just engineering and skill.

As I reached the 400-yard target, I found a deviation from my app's data and what was really happening at that distance. Using the "truing" function I was able to punch in the correct come up for that distance and my entire chart corrected out to 1,000

yards (the max distance I had it set for). After this correction, I planted my first three shots dead center on the 500-yard target and then reconfirmed that nothing got wonky at the closer distances that I just shot. To my delight, they did not. Introduction to this app alone was worth taking this class. I finished the course of fire entirely with the app data hitting out to and including 1,000 yards, as did Jake who needed a slight truing at 800 yards. After the rest of the course caught up to us, we wrapped things up in a debriefing session and had time for Q&A before heading back for dinner and a little downtime on the patio.

TO THE MOCK HUNT ZONE

Day two began on the range, except this time just to grab the rifle we spent the previous day gathering D.O.P.E. for. This time we were going to walk a "bastard distance" hunting course and engage steel targets in various scenarios. I found this day to be the most beneficial because it took that newly acquired knowledge and added a bit of realism. In the field, you aren't going to have a shooting bench and most likely a bipod is not going to clear the tall brush between you and your prey. Therefore, we were issued hunting sticks and taught a plethora of field positions that employ them as well as common items that you might have with you to steady your rifle. We engaged targets as far as 518 yards and as close as 23 yards, which was akin to facing a charging grizzly from a completely unready position.



Day two took participants through a woods walk course of fire to learn how to apply this knowledge in the field.



PARTING SHOTS

I found the overall experience to be a ton of fun and, even for a relatively advanced shooter, I picked up a great deal of insight. I also had a tremendous appreciation for what they were able to set up for us. While 1,000-yard ranges are rare, having enough acreage to walk around in and take pop shots on is even harder to find.

If you are looking to learn how to hit out to 1,000 yards, this is the place for you, but what came as a surprise was the attention that was put on teaching folks how to be a better spotter—arguably 80 percent of what

makes a long-range shot connect. Great attention is placed on reading mirage and other wind indicators on which I capitalized.

On the final evening, after a great dinner, we spun hunting tales, exchanged trade secrets and reflected upon what we grabbed from this course. Although every shooter took away something completely different, not even one of us failed to hit that 1,000-yard target, and that alone should summarize the value of this course and its instructors. For more information visit outdoorsolutionscorp.com and federalpremium.com. 🚩

TWO HATS RANCH



Two Hats Ranch is home to the entire Michigan learning experience in this article. Aside from hosting Outdoor Solutions and its guests, these folks offer some of the best guided hunts around. As we moved around the property, we spotted several 200-inch bucks that are all ripe for the taking. In addition to hunting, Two Hats is also a renowned facility for golfing, hiking, and just plain old kicking back and relaxing. Consider them for your next getaway, corporate event, or even the outdoor wedding of your dreams. For more info, visit twohats.com.

—Frank Melloni

